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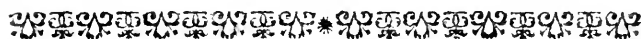
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AN
INQUIRY
INTO THE
MANAGEMENT
OF THE
POOR.



[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

A N
I N Q U I R Y
I N T O T H E
M A N A G E M E N T
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P O O R,

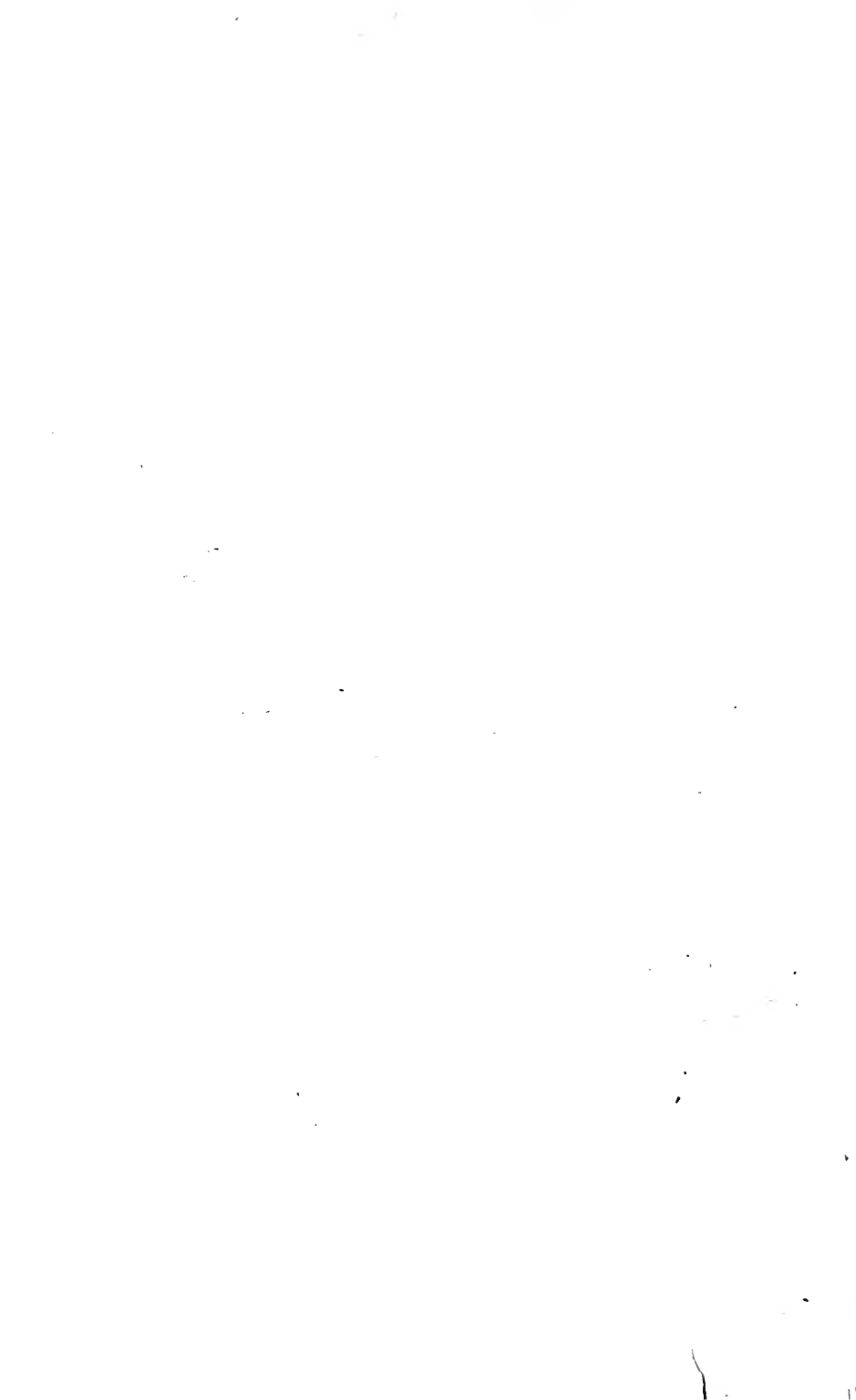
A N D
Our usual P O L I T Y respecting the
C O M M O N P E O P L E ;

W I T H
R E A S O N S
Why they have not hitherto been attended
with S U C C E S S ,

A N D
Such A L T E R A T I O N S offered to the Consideration
of the Legislature, as may probably introduce
a more general Spirit of Industry and Order,
and greatly lessen the Publick Expence.

*Quid leges sine moribus
Vanæ proficiunt ? -----*

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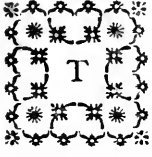


A N

I N Q U I R Y

I N T O

The MANAGEMENT of the P O O R, &c.

 H E making a proper provision for the Poor, and the enforcing a more general spirit of industry and order among the common people of this country, are objects which have engaged the attention not only of many private persons of great experience and abilities, but of the legislature also, for some ages past ; and it is greatly to be lamented, that the many schemes hitherto made use of, with views so truly laudable and benevolent, and at such immense expence to the nation, should never yet, when they came to be carried into real practice, have, in any tolerable degree,

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answered

answered the expectations of the public ; inasmuch, that many wise and judicious men have been led to think, that the inconveniencies of the community, as well as the wants and distresses of the Poor, have, upon the whole, been rather increased than lessened, by every method that has hitherto been tried to remedy them.

I am persuaded the want of success has not been owing to any natural depravity peculiar to the low people of this country, more than in common with the rest of mankind ; and, if this be admitted, which, I presume, no reasonable man will dispute, the causes of so great and interesting a disappointment, must be looked for solely in our laws and polity. How these defects and disorders arise, and what remedies may be applied with any probability of success, will be the subject of the following inquiry.

The legislature can never be employed upon an object which demands more serious and deliberate attention, and on which the strength, the riches, and safety of this nation more immediately depend, than the framing laws to relieve the wants and sufferings, and regulate the behaviour, of that great part of mankind, which in this, as well as in every other nation, the providence of God seems to have placed in a situation,

tion, where the happiness and safety of themselves, as well as the rest of the inhabitants, who are in easier circumstances, in a great measure depend on their early application to labour, their constant frugality and industry, accompanied with sober, virtuous, and orderly behaviour.

If the present laws, supported at an expence, I apprehend, without example in any other nation in the world, were calculated to bring about this desirable end, we should not now be lamenting that the disorders and sufferings of the Poor are so far from being checked, or alleviated, that they seem rather to increase and multiply upon us, from year to year, in proportion as the expence increases; the principal part of which generally lying upon the industrious farmer and tradesman, and who, seeing so great a part of it fall to the share of the clamorous, undeserving and idle, distribute it grudgingly; which is the foundation of a circumstance most unhappily disagreeable in so great an expence, that the giver has little or no pretensions to benevolence or charity; and it is much to be feared that sentiments of humility and thankfulness, are too often wanting in the mind of the receiver. Wherefore, it is greatly to be wished that some method could be thought on which might make the raising the money for the support of the Poor, in some greater degree,

the voluntary act of the persons who supply it ; by which means they would be necessarily led to consider themselves more accountable to their benefactors for their behaviour, when they found they were at liberty to regulate their relief, not only in proportion to the wants, but also the defects of the different objects which should present themselves.

Compulsive laws for the support of the Poor, I apprehend, are peculiar to this country ; notwithstanding which, they have continued so many years the mode of relief with us, that I am persuaded, no considerate person would recommend a total alteration at once ; but yet something might undoubtedly be done without the least danger of any inconvenience arising from thence. Indeed, if the inhabitants of every parish, who are now rateable to the poor, were left intirely at liberty to give or withhold their proportion, the consequence would certainly be, that the burthen must fall very unequally ; for which reason, as things now stand, I would not propose altering the law, so far as it regards the equality of the rate, but principally as to the power and manner of distributing the money after it is raised.

The offices of church-warden, and overseer of the Poor, especially in all large and populous parishes

parishes in cities and great towns, are generally filled up with tradesmen and mechanics, who are often very little interested in the expence, and whose situation makes it almost impossible for them not to do many things through favour and partiality. And not only a great part of the year is generally elapsed before they can well be, in any tolerable degree, acquainted with the nature of their duty; but, besides, I apprehend, it is considered by most of them as an office liable to much censure, trouble, and loss of time; and, therefore, their principal care is to rub through it with as little inconvenience to themselves as they possibly can. For which reasons, I presume, it would be much more desirable that the disposal of the money, raised for the relief of the Poor, should remain under the sole authority of a parish-meeting, or vestry. And in large parishes, that the care and trouble may be more divided, a certain number of the most considerable housekeepers, together with the church-warden and overseer, might be chosen annually, or as much oftener as should be found necessary; and that every thing which regards the care and relief of the Poor, should be left under their management and direction; subject, nevertheless, to the final controul and orders of a parish-meeting; which should be summoned, from time to time, whenever any circumstance arose which required their attention.

And this committee, chosen as above for the management of the Poor, I apprehend, should meet once a week, or oftener, if necessary. And that proper objects of charity may never be at a loss to know where to apply for relief, the churchwardens and overseers might be empowered to administer occasional assistance, until the next meeting of the parish, or committee, from which time the whole care and management should rest with them. And, perhaps, if all the Inhabitants who hold under ten, twelve, or fifteen pounds a year in land; or eight, ten, or twelve pounds a year in houses, according as the value of house-rent may happen to be in different parts of the country, were excused from serving parish-offices, and also from the trouble and loss of time attending the care and management of the poor, it might be the means of preventing many inconveniencies; as it does not seem agreeable to reason and good policy, that persons so little interested, and who, nevertheless, in some parishes, may make a considerable majority, and at the same time are, most probably, from their rank and education, to be supposed the least qualified to form a right judgment, should have it in their power to controul all the great land-holders, and principal inhabitants, upon whom the burthen almost wholly lies, and to direct an affair

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of such great consequence to the public, as well as the parties more immediately concerned.

I am persuaded, if the determination of a parish meeting was generally final, and all appeals to justices of peace discouraged as much as possible, the consequence would be most salutary not only to the public, but also to the Poor themselves, in the long run. In regard to the public, the Poor would certainly be put more upon their good behaviour; and would be naturally led into sentiments of greater humility, respect, and thankfulness, when they found that the supplying their wants, and alleviating their sufferings, arose in great measure from voluntary kindness, and not altogether from the compulsion of laws. In regard to the Poor themselves, when they were made sensible that their relief in time of distress, was left more at the discretion and benevolence of the parish, than under the former compulsive laws; they would of course become more circumspect and provident in their general conduct, and in a manner compelled to make some provision against the day of want: and so by degrees, be most probably led into habits of sobriety, frugality, and industry, which they would most certainly find to be a situation infinitely more desirable and happy, than their former life of a scanty, dependent, and precarious support.

I am aware, that the taking the provision for the Poor, so much out of the hands of the gentlemen in the commission of the peace, may probably meet with opposition : but although I foresee that many may differ from me in that point, nevertheless, I am thoroughly persuaded the evil cannot be sufficiently redressed, except the interfering of that power shall be in the whole, or in great part superseded. The inhabitants of every parish, must be the best, and indeed almost the only judges, both of the behaviour, the wants, and defects of their own Poor : and I apprehend, the greatest part of appeals to justices of peace, is from the clamorous, undeserving, and idle ; who generally flatter themselves, that either by tiring them with their importunities, or by working upon their passions by artful representations of distress, they shall at last be able to prevail : and as those magistrates, like other men, are not exempt from the common infirmities of human nature ; the popularity of the action, co-operating with the natural tenderness and compassion, even of the best, and most cautious men, may sometimes very undesignedly mislead their judgment ; and by that means many undeserving persons encouraged to continue in idleness, who without this resource would be under the necessity of providing for themselves by some honest labour.

But if this should be considered, as taking too much out of the hands of those magistrates, and that the Poor might possibly thereby be exposed sometimes to unjustifiable hardships; at least the appointment of one justice of peace only, should never be binding upon any parish, until it shall be confirmed by the quarter or petty sessions, or by some other justice in the neighbourhood, to be named by the parish that shall think itself aggrieved; in order that an affair of such consequence to the public, as well as the persons immediately interested, may not altogether depend on the prejudice, the easiness, the caprice, or perhaps, sometimes, the resentment of one man.

There is no great reason to apprehend, that the majority of the inhabitants of any parish, whatever may be supposed of particular persons, would ever suffer any objects labouring under real distress, although they should be ever so undeserving, to continue in want and misery, without administering relief; much less to sink under the pressure of their misfortunes. Unfeigned distress operates so strongly upon the feelings of mankind in general, that they are not apt, at those times especially, to make any strict scrutiny into the causes that might have produced it. The natural sentiments of tenderness and humanity,

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imperceptibly compel men to employ all their attention, upon finding out present means of relieving the unhappy sufferer. Few indeed would be the occasions of mens exercising their charity, should they confine it to those only, who labour under misfortunes they could not possibly have prevented.

The natural genius of the English nation, is most strongly against the supposition of every tendency to cruelty, and want of compassion; and in fact, the great number of public and private charities, established of late years, and supported at this time, by voluntary subscriptions, notwithstanding the heavy burthen of the poor rate; to which may be added the large contributions raised upon the public by common beggars, together with such sums as are distributed continually to necessitous families, by charitable persons, many of which are done in secret; are unanswerable arguments, that at present the torrent runs quite the contrary way. And if the legislature should think proper to supersede, or restrain the appeals to justices of peace; a further security might be provided against the want of compassion in parishes, for the sufferings of the helpless poor, by subjecting them to the heaviest penalties, if any instances, properly attested, should be produced of their leaving any distressed
objects

objects to sink under the weight of their miseries, by with-holding their assistance, when it shall appear that the case had been made known to them, and application made for relief; nay although the event should not prove fatal to the unhappy sufferer, any unjustifiable, or cruel disregard of the distresses of the helpless poor, should be liable to a proportionable degree of censure and penalty. But I flatter myself, this part of the law would seldom want to be carried into execution.

The fundamental error respecting the lower class of people, lies principally here; that the general tendency of our laws and polity, is rather aimed at the supplying their necessities, and punishing their disorders and offences, after they have happened, than in removing and preventing the causes of them; and until some effectual alteration shall be made in this respect, the legislature may go on adopting plan after plan; may give justices of peace still more unlimited powers for enlarging parish allowances; may enable parishes to erect work-houses of their own, for their reception and employment, or for that purpose may form the whole nation into larger districts: the magistrate may go on to fine, imprison, and torture with corporal punishment unhappy offenders; may send whole fleets of them into banishment and slavery, in our foreign colonies;

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may put a final period to their violence and outrage, by the most ignominious death : and to compleat the horrid scene, may expose their carcases on gibbets, as a warning and terror to others, until he is weary of the drudgery, it will all amount to nothing. Men that have been suffered to go on from their childhood in idleness and vice, if they are not restrained by the laws, will continue to be idle and vicious. Hunger, and thirst, and cold, will compel them to look out for any means, be they ever so dangerous, of removing those inconveniencies ; the importunate and clamorous calls of nature will be heard and obeyed ; they will admit of no denial or delay ; the work-houses and jails will never want inhabitants ; the public expence, and public terror, will go on increasing.

If this be the true state of the case, surely if any regard for the happiness and safety of mankind, if any compassion for the miseries of our fellow creatures, is left among men, it is high time to look out for a remedy, that in some measure may be adequate to so dangerous and universal a disorder.

In every country, the first magistrate is to be considered, as the political father of all his people ; as well of those who neglect and violate his laws,

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as of those who regard and obey them ; the refractory and disobedient, are still refractory and disobedient children ; nor are they at all the less on that account the objects of his care and tenderness ; more especially, if a total neglect of their morals and conduct, has naturally led them into that unhappy situation ; and, to complete the public mismanagement, every temptation besides been thrown in their way, that might seduce them into disobedience and ruin.

This fundamental error does not only prevail in the public laws and polity of this country, but even in private charities the same error too generally prevails.

In the metropolis of this kingdom, I have heard, there are five or six thousand of the children of the very lowest of the people, clothed and educated at the expence of private persons ; the males, I apprehend, are generally instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic ; the females, in reading, knitting, and needle-work ; and, I presume, both of them may be continued in these places of education, until they arrive at the age of fourteen. The males, during the whole time of their reception, are, I fear, too seldom engaged about any thing that has so much as the appearance of labour. The females, indeed, I believe,
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are generally kept, as was observed above, some considerable part of their time, to knitting, or needle-work. But if some meaner, and more laborious imployment, especially when they are a little grown up, could be found for them, and take place of, or at least be joined along with the other, it would undoubtedly be much more suitable to the lowness of their birth and station, and have a natural tendency to fit them for those servile occupations, which in the ordinary course of providence are most likely to fall to their share. And in order thereto, until some such proper labour shall be procured for them, the absence from school, both of the males and females, should always be dispensed with, whenever any one of the trustees, or the master or mistress, shall be satisfied that the assistance of their labour is wanted at home, by their parents or friends, either for themselves, or any other persons. And indeed, it is a duty incumbent upon the trustees, previous to their admitting such children, to press it upon their friends in the strongest manner, to use their utmost endeavours to find out some useful labour or other, to employ them about, and to give them to understand, that although they should be able to spare them only an hour or two in a day, they will be admitted to the instruction of the school ; always taking the strictest care, that the children do not impose upon them by false pretences ; and
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by these means, there might be some probability of their becoming useful subjects. There are many industrious families, much above the rank of the poor people, the instruction and employment of whose children we have now under consideration, who think their own sufficiently educated if they spare them an hour or two in an evening for that purpose, after the various employments and labours of the day are over. These poor children are certainly taken out of that rank and order wherein providence had placed them, and must generally be left either destitute of all employment and provision, or take the place of many of the children of more industrious, reputable, and deserving parents; and sometimes, perhaps, of those very persons who had contributed to the expence of their education. What must be the consequence should this mistaken charity prevail universally? Who will be left to do the labour and drudgery of the world? I am afraid, if we form our judgment from observation and experience, we must not expect that the habit and love of labour will be easily acquired by those who do not begin to set about it until the age of fourteen. Young persons so educated, will generally have other and higher views: but how are those expectations to be satisfied? It is impossible they should; there is not room left for them. Such numbers thrown into the world un-

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accustomed to labour, and destitute of other means of support, cannot but raise very alarming apprehensions both for the unhappy objects themselves, and the public.

Whenever either the legislature, or private persons, employ their care about the children of the Poor, the principal part of their plan should be to enure them to the lowest and most early labour; it will always remain the ground and foundation of every other virtue; the good effects of it will accompany them through every station and period of life. All other teaching, which is not accompanied with labour, will be utterly unprofitable both to themselves and the public. The love and practice of labour, make the principal part of the true religion of the great bulk of mankind. But the general rules here recommended, are by no means intended to take place whenever persons of fortune and ability shall discover any striking appearances of parts and genius in the children, even of the very lowest of the people.

There are many other charitable foundations in the metropolis, originally planned and supported at this time by private persons; which, in so extensive and populous a city, if kept within due bounds and regulations, are both laudable and useful. But, surely, these things may be carried
too

too far. Should the same humour prevail the next generation, as has the last, should we not have reason to be afraid of the consequences? If we once come to take out of the hands of the common people, the care and expence of educating and supporting their children, and make the provision for both of them too general and extensive, under every circumstance of misfortune and infirmity, from whatever causes they shall arise, whether from events which they could neither foresee nor provide against, or from idleness, extravagance and vice, shall we not be in danger of greatly weakening, or perhaps almost utterly effacing those great motives to frugality and industry, originally planted by providence, for the wisest purposes, in the minds of all men, *viz.* The desire of procuring for ourselves a comfortable and independent support in sickness and in health, and the love and care of our offspring? Should we not be more usefully employed if we endeavoured to find out some means or other of invigorating, and calling out into real practice, those great and noble principles, and motives to action, which, in the minds of too many, are already become languid, and almost effaced?

There was a time within the memory of many persons now living, when the common people in general had too much spirit and sense of shame,

to accept charity either from parishes or hospitals, but thought it much more eligible to struggle hard to make some provision by their frugality and industry, against the common accidents of sickness, dearth of necessaries, and want of employment. At present their numbers keep them in countenance, and they crowd the doors of the church wardens and overseers, and fill the work-houses and hospitals, without the least scruple or remorse ; inasmuch, that if an exact account could be procured of all such as are annually supported or relieved by public or private charities within the bills of mortality, and a comparison made with what our situation was in that respect about half a century ago ; at which time, if we form our judgment from the yearly bills of mortality, I apprehend, the city was nearly as populous as at present ; I am persuaded it would both astonish and alarm the most supine and inconsiderate. By this means not only a general carelessness, and want of attention to their own well-being and support, and, instead thereof, a total reliance upon the public for every thing in all cases of distress, must necessarily be introduced ; but also an universal meanness, and degeneracy from our true ancient spirit, must, in time, prevail among the common people of this country.

Another

Another snare and temptation to idleness, expence and vice, laid for the common people, is the great and useless number of public-houses which we almost every where meet with; most of which, not being wanted for real convenience and accommodation, are perverted to the worst and most dangerous abuses; are often made the receptacles of prostitutes, pilferers and thieves, and all other transgressors of the laws; or at least the seducers of the thoughtless people into idleness, gaming, tippling, and the squandering away those small earnings, which are wanted at home for the support of their starving families, and too often into mortgaging their future labour to gratify the present humour of riot and excess: nor is there, in the long catalogue of errors in the laws and polity of this country, so fruitful a source of evil, nor which calls more loudly upon all those who have it in their power to put a stop to so universal and dangerous a contagion. The consideration of the revenue will never, surely, be urged as a motive for continuing so destructive an abuse; even supposing any persons could form so wrong and partial a judgment of things, as to imagine the revenue can ever suffer, upon the whole, by changing the intemperance, extravagance, and idleness of the common people, into sobriety, frugality and industry; upon which alone the riches and strength of the nation de-

pend. Nor can there, indeed, be adopted, by statesmen, a more weak and dangerous error, than to suppose, that doing right, can ever possibly be attended with bad consequences. If Truth and Right are not those infallible guides which we may always safely follow, both in speculation and practice, to what must we have recourse? And, contrary to this plain and unerring rule, if the licencing such useless numbers of houses by public authority, as can have no possible means of support but by corrupting the morals of the common people, and introducing every kind of vice and disorder, is not establishing iniquity by law, I am at a loss to know what can be called so.

Whenever we shall be disposed, in earnest, to put a stop to this dangerous evil, the present method of licencing must be entirely altered. As the inhabitants of every parish must be the best, and generally the only judges of what accommodations of this sort are wanting, no licence should ever be granted for any person to keep a public-house, until it has been previously resolved by a parish-meeting, after public notice given in the church, at least six days, for that purpose, that such a house is wanted in that place for the accommodation of the public, and that the person mentioned in the resolution is a fit person.

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If this method was steadily pursued, these houses would hardly ever exceed the number that was really wanted, nor fall into improper hands; the persons who kept them would always be enabled to procure for themselves a sufficient and reputable livelihood, without being under the temptation of using those hurtful and dangerous methods of supporting themselves, which are too frequently practised under the present management. Besides, it is worthy the attention of the legislature to have some regard to the great number of hands that are rendered useless to the community by this unnecessary increase of public-houses. For, besides the man and his wife, when they are kept by married persons, they generally employ, at least, one servant; nor is the conversation and examples, to be met with in those houses, at all calculated to prepare their children to make industrious and useful subjects.

Numberless other temptations to idleness and expence, are thrown in the way of the thoughtless people, either by the permission or connivance of the civil magistrate. How scandalous is it to see the whole country laid under such heavy contribution by those itinerant impostors, who, under pretence of administering relief in all the various disorders that afflict mankind, are permitted to erect public stages, where, by their low

humour, buffoonery, and other various amusements, adapted to the taste of the common people, and, by the addition of a few trinkets of small value, by way of lottery, to put off their pills and plaisters, in open violation of the laws, the ignorant multitude are drawn together, and cheated both of their money, time, and health, and frequently led also into other expences. Nor do these infamous frauds consist in trifling sums ; it is not, I apprehend, very unusual to see from twenty to thirty pounds, and, perhaps, sometimes more, in one market-day, picked out of the pockets of the very lowest of the people, by these Charlatans. It would be endless to enumerate the various cheats and impostors that are suffered to delude the credulous people.

I must not omit to take notice, in this place, of another great encouragement to idleness and vice ; I mean the general permission given to common beggars to impose, by their various arts, upon the benevolence and humanity of the people. The money levied upon the public by the different sects of Mendicants, is much more considerable, I apprehend, than men generally imagine. We are told they have formed themselves into a regular constitution, with their laws, their magistrates, their provincial and general assemblies, where their peculiar interests and concerns are debated

bated and settled. Whether their political institutions, and internal government, may be carried to such lengths and degrees of perfection as some men have imagined, I know not; but that the suffering such gross impositions, and dangerous abuses, to be carried on without any notice being taken by the public, or any restraint from the civil magistrate, is contrary to sound policy, and must be the occasion of great licentiousness, disorder, and unnecessary expence, can admit of no doubt: and that, whenever any effectual remedy shall be found out, and steadily applied, it must become a very great and interesting acquisition to the national strength; as the public detriment arising from this abuse is two-fold, both in the contributions these vagabonds raise upon the industrious common people, for it is from that quarter their encouragement principally arises, and in the loss of their labour. And, indeed, so long as the Poor shall be suffered to procure for themselves subsistence by these illegal and dangerous methods, all attempts towards enforcing a more general spirit of order and industry among the idle part of the common people, will ever prove vain and unsuccessful. Some effectual check, it is hoped, will be given to such hurtful and dangerous misapplication of the public benevolence, by enlarging the rewards to all such persons as shall apprehend and deliver them into the custody of

a peace-officer, to be conveyed by him before the civil magistrate ; by enforcing such penalties upon all parishes where these strolling mendicants shall be relieved, and such punishments upon the offenders, as shall seem proper to the wisdom of parliament.

But the most daring offence against public order and decency, and which demands immediate redress, is the scandalous permission of common prostitutes to infest the streets of the metropolis ; a reproach upon civil government and good manners without example, I apprehend, in any other part of the world. The secret haunts and dark retreats of lewdness and debauchery, perhaps, may not so easily be ferretted out ; but where the offence is committed before the face of the whole world, the suffering such infamous abuses to go unpunished, can admit of no excuse. Most dangerous and deplorable, indeed, is the situation of the poor inconsiderate people ! as soon as the public house has turned them out, heated and prepared for any thing that may offer, the prostitute stands ready in the street to lay hold of them, and seize what the publican had left, and then send them home to mourn at leisure over their empty pockets and ruined health. The magistrate himself is not in a situation much to be envied, who is obliged to put the laws in execution,

tion, and punish unhappy thoughtless men ; who through a total want of public care, and by suffering every possible temptation to be thrown in their way, have been almost unavoidably seduced from their duty, and drawn into ruin.

Another public error become now almost universal, is the introduction of foreign teas, instead of the wholesome produce of our own country. It is surely the most unexampled and unnatural policy to suffer the whole body of the common people, especially females of every age, to make at least one meal a day upon a pernicious drug, which grows in the remotest parts of Asia, and traverses two thirds of the globe before it reaches this country : a drug which instead of administering nourishment and strength, generally leaves those that make use of it weakened and dispirited, and by that means naturally introduces the love and habit of strong liquors, as a present relief. Besides the price of the tea and sugar, which would go a good way towards the support of a poor family, and without reckoning the loss of time usual upon these gossiping occasions ; there is another great additional expence of fuel upon this account alone ; the butter also which accompanies this absurd meal is generally too expensive a food for the common use of the Poor ; and such is the infatuation of these unhappy people,

people, that they will rather suffer themselves and their children to be reduced to the greatest extremities of distress, by the want of common necessities, than give up this favourite beverage. All men see and lament the evil, but no one hardly so much as thinks of a remedy. What objection could be made, if all persons who have no other way of supporting themselves and families, except by their frugality and industry, were subjected to a penalty of forty shillings, upon proof that any tea had been found or used in their houses, without a licence, for which each family should pay ten shillings annually, or more, if that should not be found sufficient to prevent the use of it? It can hardly be supposed that the duty upon tea would suffer much upon this account, as the smuggler almost wholly ingrosses this set of customers. If these licences were not confined to the common people, but made general, the good arising to the public, by restraining them from so hurtful and expensive a diet, would be so great and acceptable, that few, I apprehend, would complain.

It cannot be doubted but that very blameable remissness, and want of attention to the indispensable cares and duties they owe to their distressed families, have been encouraged and introduced among the common people, and consequently the public expence greatly increased, by the delusions
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of certain vain and fanatical teachers, who are greatly multiplied of late years; and who have perplexed many well-meaning christians with their explanations of doctrines concerning predestination, faith, and satisfaction for sin, in a manner not only inconsistent with the whole tenor of the holy Scriptures, but likewise with the justice and goodness of almighty God; and indeed so as to make all religion, and all attempts towards any advancements in piety and virtue, so far as regards our future condition, unnecessary and useless. By which means, on one hand, many pious people have been driven to great, and even fatal despondency, by not perceiving within themselves those internal feelings of the divine favour and acceptance, which had been described to them, as the necessary tokens of a saving faith. Whereas in truth, the faith of pious, virtuous, and sincere christians, cannot possibly be dangerously erroneous, or displeasing to almighty God; and on the other hand, too much foundation has undoubtedly been given for ignorant and enthusiastical persons, to make themselves easy, under the most unjustifiable irregularities of practice, by laying unwarrantable stress and dependence upon certain modes of believing. For notwithstanding a sincere, unprejudiced, and careful inquiry after all such things as we are bound either to believe or practise, is very commendable,

able, and indeed a duty incumbent upon all men, according to their different abilities and opportunities, yet the bare assent of the mind to any religious truths whatever, as it does not depend on the will, but necessarily and irresistibly follows the force of such evidence as shall appear, and, which it is to be feared, is generally given by these deluded people upon trust, without any sufficient evidence, or previous inquiry at all, cannot possibly be a matter of merit in itself; and is so far from being any atonement, or excuse for vicious indulgences, or the neglect of any moral duties, that on the contrary it is the greatest possible aggravation. As the Sacred Writings, in order to guard against such vain imaginations, and dangerous follies of men, do not fail to press it upon their minds, in the most emphatical manner, to have no expectation of obtaining the favour of God by any other means whatever, except by the constant and uniform practice of righteousness, holiness, and purity of life; and that he will not accept of any thing in their stead; and that all faith without them; all attendances upon any religious institutions; all ceremonies, rites and observances whatever, to the neglect of these great and indispensable duties, which are of unalterable and eternal obligation, as having their foundation in the very nature and reason of things, and are the rule by which even God himself vouchsafes to regulate

regulate his dealings towards all his creatures, are not only vain and useless, but ~~an~~ abomination in his sight. Which things, indeed, are so evident in themselves, so agreeable to right reason, and our genuine uncorrupted notions of the wisdom, the justice, and holiness of the supreme governor of the world, that, if men through inexcusable vanity and carelessness did not give up their understandings to be misguided and over-ruled by the most unreasonable prejudices, or by the dominion of some favourite lusts, they could not possibly suffer themselves to be betrayed into such gross and dangerous corruptions.

I could wish, for the honour of my country, I might allow myself to throw a veil over those scenes of idleness, disorder, and licentiousness of every kind, which are encouraged and promoted at elections for members of parliament ; but these practices have too considerable a share in corrupting the morals of the people, and the reputation, safety, and happiness of the present, and future ages, are too nearly concerned to excuse my being silent. For, notwithstanding that honourable house, with a zeal and spirit becoming true patriots, have at all times discouraged every kind of undue influence at the elections of their members, and have guarded all approaches to that asylum of British liberty, with every barrier that human
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caution could suggest; and although it may be very true, that even those gentlemen, whose elections seem to be altogether secure, and who may be said to be almost out of the very reach of opposition, as they are chosen by voters, who in general hold immediately under them, and depend in great measure upon them, may notwithstanding, by the prevalence of custom, find themselves obliged to be at some considerable expence in providing suitable entertainment for them, about the time of election, and perhaps at other times occasionally; and although it is to be wished that these things were otherwise, yet in all this if matters are kept within due and moderate bounds, there may be no very great harm; as a considerable part of that money might probably be expended, in some shape or other, among the same sort of people, during the course of a parliament, by neighbouring gentlemen of fortune, benevolence, and hospitality, if the election was out of the question. And although many gentlemen of character and great worth, contrary to their original design, and the approbation perhaps of their own minds, may sometimes be insensibly led into the most expensive and unjustifiable measures, when they meet with what they call unreasonable and unnatural opposition; and which most men are apt to palliate with the pretence that it is done in their own defence; and that it is always fair
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and allowable to fight men at their own weapons. And although the gentlemen who begin the opposition generally pretend their principal motive is to keep others out, who would oppose their friends, and that cause, which all men claim as the cause of liberty and their country ; and that if one side was to sit still and quietly look on, it would become in some degree a sort of betraying their trust, and leaving their enemies at full liberty to prosecute their hurtful schemes ; and that the zeal of agents and friends often carries them beyond the instructions or intentions of their principals ; and which, I do not in the least doubt, may often be the case ; yet, whenever these things are carried to undue lengths, and the people drawn from their lawful occupations, not only from day to day, and week to week, but sometimes perhaps for many months together, to be partakers of the most disorderly and riotous excesses ; and are often seduced, it is to be feared, by more corrupt and dangerous temptations ; no motives whatever can excuse what is so apparently wrong in itself ; and which does not only of necessity introduce a spirit of idleness, intemperance, and prostitution, together with perpetual animosities and ill blood among the nearest neighbours and best friends, but in the long run, if some remedy shall not be found, must sap the very foundations of our most excellent constitution.

tion. I do not like this doing evil that good may come of it ; it is a most destructive principle ; and carries men, if they follow it as far as it will lead them, to the most dangerous and pernicious consequences.

*Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget.*—

These are matters well worthy the most serious attention of all lovers of their country. For when we reflect that this noble fabric of liberty and laws, so wisely planned and happily erected by our forefathers, after so many glorious struggles, and defended at the expence of so much blood and treasure, and which has been delivered down into our hands whole and intire as a most sacred depositum ; that this work of ages, the admiration and envy of all mankind ; this last retreat left upon earth for freedom and public happiness ; that this only possession, truly worthy the pursuit and contention of wise and virtuous men, is in such imminent danger of being torn down and trampled upon, and this respectable and enlightened nation reduced to it's ancient state of darkness, superstition, and tyranny ; and all this, not by the superior power and bravery of any foreign enemy, but by the baseness and treason of her own unnatural and degenerate sons ; I own the melancholy prospect depresses my spirits, and fills my
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heart with sadness and solicitude for the fate of those that are to come after me. Prostitution, venality, and a general corruption of manners, as unavoidably tend to deprive every people of their liberty and independency, as any natural causes produce their effects; and although our case at present may not perhaps be altogether desperate; yet if some remedy shall not be timely applied, our ruin cannot possibly be removed to any very great distance. But for the present we will shift the disagreeable scene, and flatter ourselves with the hopes, that that august assembly, the ancient and natural guardian of liberty, will not cease endeavouring to put some stop to so dangerous and spreading a contagion; and that men of known independency, reputation, and abilities, a sufficient number of which, if we are not wanting to ourselves and our country, are always to be found, may be sought out and invited to save us; who will pay a more just regard to their own dignity and importance, and make use of more honest and laudable methods of recommending themselves to our approbation and confidence, than by encouraging, and introducing such shameless scenes of riot, intemperance, and general confusion; and tempting men of all degrees to prostitute their conscience, their honour, and their country to the most sordid and infamous considerations. And it were to be wished the evil would always stop here;

the most solemn and awful appeal the laws have been able to contrive as the test of truth among men, may always be demanded ; in which case many persons must either excuse themselves, and thereby publicly acknowledge their baseness and prostitution, or go thorough stitch with the business, and plunge at once into all the horrors of perjury ; in which it is to be feared these corrupt practices too frequently terminate. Perhaps if the civil magistrate on these occasions was always impowered, and obliged upon information, to interpose his authority, and endeavour, to the utmost of his abilities, to enforce industry, sobriety, and order, by immediately taking away, or at least suspending, the licences of all public houses whatever, whether inns, or common alehouses, except for the necessary accommodation of travellers, which should suffer such disorders and excesses, and by inflicting such punishments upon the offenders as the laws will justify, it might be a probable means of preserving not only the health, well-being, and morals of the people, but at the same time also the fortunes of the candidates from being subjected to such ruinous expences, by those extravagant lengths to which things are sometimes carried. And if you can once prevail upon the people to be sober and industrious, their situation and circumstances will of course be so much altered for the better, that they will not, by any means, lay so open

open and exposed to other kinds of corruption. Besides, as on many occasions of vacancies during the continuance of a parliament; but more especially at every general election, great numbers of manufacturers, artificers and other labouring men, to the great detriment of the public, as well as themselves, are often taken from their families and occupations, and conveyed from the metropolis, and other places, to give their votes in the most distant counties, cities, and boroughs, by the different candidates, whenever there is any considerable contention. Now when these expences come to be added to the long list of all the others that must necessarily be incurred upon the immediate seat of war, they swell sometimes to so immense a bulk, that few men who have not tasted of the munificence of Asiatic princes, are able to support them, without making such breaches in their fortunes as they may never afterwards, perhaps, be able to repair. And as the presence, or absence, of all such voters would most probably leave the parties concerned, in point of equality of votes, pretty nearly in the same situation they were before; if all such conveyances, at the expence of candidates, were included in the bribery laws, it might become a most interesting reformation both for the candidates themselves, the voters, and the public.

Whenever we shall in earnest set about the great work of reformation, the task perhaps may not be found altogether so difficult or impracticable as has been generally imagined. If the obstacles that lie in the way have been owing either to some essential defects in the laws, or to the want of proper care and attention in watching over the behaviour of the common people, the case cannot be desperate. But then we must not any longer continue in that impolitic and unnatural practice of beginning the work where all wise legislators have left off; but let the public care be employed for the future, rather in finding out means for preventing their wants and disorders, than in so preposterous a manner confining our whole attention to the relieving the one, and punishing the other after they have happened. And until this shall be done with some tolerable degree of success, the punishments of the magistrate will never sufficiently restrain men from disorder and violence; the wants and distresses of the poor will go on increasing together with the public expence.

That disorder and violence must happen, in some degree, in this country as well as the rest of the world; that there will remain a sufficient number of necessitous and distressed objects to exercise our benevolence and humanity, is always to be expected, notwithstanding we do every thing
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in our power to prevent it. But that much may be done if we are not wanting to ourselves and the public, and things put upon a far better footing than they are at present, I think can admit of no doubt.

The care and attention of mankind in general, are so totally taken up and employed about their own concerns and interests, and so little in reality upon the public welfare, where it is not immediately and sensibly connected with their own, that I apprehend, as things now stand, no great matters are to be expected from that quarter, notwithstanding mens general pretensions and professions, if experience did not prove the contrary, would incline us to hope for better things.

It will easily be granted, I presume, that the true characters of the common people, their virtues and vices, their industry and idleness, cannot well be thoroughly known, except by the persons among whom they immediately reside: and I must beg leave to add, except the same people, who are almost the only judges and witnesses of, and most materially interested in their behaviour, are in some greater degree than is provided for by any laws at present, made responsible for the conduct of the common people, who reside within each

particular parish, we shall never be able to proceed with any reasonable expectation of success.

That all the inhabitants in every parish, who have no other visible and usual way of maintaining themselves and families except their frugality and industry, whenever they are observed to spend their time in idleness, and run into disorders and expences that cannot be supported by honest and lawful methods, should be accountable somewhere for their proceedings, I think is most reasonable. The justice of peace is undoubtedly the proper magistrate to hear and judge in such cases. The inhabitants of their own and neighbouring parishes are generally the only persons that can well be supposed capable of giving true information; if this magistrate has not already, by the laws in being, sufficient powers to enquire and regulate in such manner as shall appear reasonable and proper to preserve the good order and safety of the public, it is high time that, so far as is consistent with the genius and freedom of the laws of this country, he should be enabled to restrain men from idleness, intemperance, and disorder, and by some means or other oblige them to be industrious, sober, and peaceable, and to endeavour to the best of their abilities to support themselves and families; or that they should be liable to some degree of censure and punishment if they should
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prove refractory ; it certainly would be the most friendly and benevolent restraint, it would in other words be obliging them to be independent and happy. And some effectual regulations and restraints of this sort are become the more absolutely and indispensibly necessary, as we have found, to our great misfortune and cost, by the experience of ages, what little influence and effect the sufferings and examples of others have upon the minds and practice of inconsiderate men, when idleness and vice, through a total want of public care, have been once permitted to become habitual and inveterate.

But this whole plan will want spirit and activity, if the inhabitants of every parish shall not be made accountable to the public, for the behaviour of the common people that reside among them. But this can never be carried into general practice, so as to bring about any tolerable degree of reformation, except their neglect of so great and important a duty be attended with certain and immediate loss to themselves. This will operate with greater force upon the minds of mankind in general, than any fancied notions of patriotism and public spirit, or than any apprehensions of expence and danger, that are removed to a great distance, and perhaps at last thought to be in some degree uncertain.

As things now stand, any inhabitant may go on from day to day, and year to year, to be as idle as he pleases ; may spend his time and money in riot and disorder in public houses, to the great detriment and distress both of himself and his family ; may totally absent himself from all places of public worship during the whole course of his life ; or be notoriously guilty of the most profane and daring impieties : nay, although he is publicly known to be a common poacher, or smuggler, by which illegal practices, and dangerous connections, young unexperienced thoughtless men are fatally, and almost insensibly, led into every kind and degree of criminal practice ; or although he should give the strongest reasons to suspect him of more dangerous breaches of the laws ; yet if he does not apply to the parish for relief, he may generally go on, to the terror of every one, without any enquiry being made into his behaviour by the inhabitants, or any restraint from the civil magistrate ; notwithstanding all around him, who see or hear of his proceedings, expect every day when these things will terminate in his own ruin, and bring his distressed family a standing charge upon the parish. Surely if any method can be thought on, consistent with our constitution and the spirit of our laws, to draw unhappy thoughtless men from such miserable and dangerous circumstances, and lead them by degrees to habits of sobriety and honest

honest industry, no difficulties should discourage us from using our utmost endeavours to compleat so salutary a work. The public safety demands it at our hands; the distresses and miseries, and too frequently the final ruin of these unfortunate people, call loudly upon us to rescue them from so dangerous a situation. But this can never be expected until every parish shall keep a better look out, and endeavour more effectually to discourage every tendency in the common people towards the first causes of these disorders. It will always be their interest, as well as duty, to see this necessary work carried into effectual execution; but it is much to be feared, that no sufficient remedy will ever be found that may give any considerable check to so confirmed and inveterate an evil, unless the legislature shall awaken, and excite the minds of men to promote their own, as well as the public safety, by making their neglect of this most essential duty attended with certain and immediate loss to themselves. I would, therefore, beg leave to propose it to the consideration of parliament, whenever any common person, who has no other visible way of providing for himself and family except his frugality and industry, shall be convicted of any capital felony, or of poaching, hedge-breaking, robbing of rivers or ponds of fish, stealing of fowls, deer-stealing, smuggling, or any other criminal breach of the laws; or of no-

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torious idleness, drunkenness, or profane cursing and swearing, or of being an habitual absentee from all places of public worship; whether the parish where such person usually resides, should not be subject to a penalty in proportion to the heinousness of the offence. Perhaps if the fine for robbery or burglary, or any other capital offence, was set at twenty pounds, it would not be too high; nor do I apprehend that, in any criminal case whatever, it should be put lower than five pounds. These unhappy delinquents never fail to give sufficient notice long beforehand of what we may most reasonably expect either from their idleness, extravagance, or some other suspicious circumstances. It is therefore the most reasonable thing in the world, that the very people through whose negligence alone these dangers and disorders have been brought upon the public, should be made sensible of it in such manner as may probably oblige them to be more careful for the future, more especially as it is impossible, in the nature and order of things, that the behaviour of the common people should be watched over and regulated with the least prospect of success, by any persons whatever, except by those among whom they generally and immediately reside.

Something of this sort is already established by law in the case of robberies between sun and
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fun, by levying upon the county where the fact was committed, the sum that was lost, although it should be ever so considerable ; which seems to bear much harder upon counties and hundreds, than the law here proposed, as the robber very probably might not reside among them ; and if he had, the district charged with the repayment of the money, is generally too extensive to be capable, by the present laws, of having any sufficient care or inspection taken into the behaviour of all the inhabitants.

Many parishes also, have offered and paid rewards for the apprehending and convicting offenders, full as high as the penalties here proposed. Much higher are settled by act of parliament, and higher still are frequently advertised by secretaries of state, and other public and private authority for the same purposes, which are often, without doubt, of great service to the community. It makes no difference to parishes, whether they pay the money in rewards or penalties, but the good influence the method here proposed must probably have over the minds of the people more than the other, and its natural tendency to promote industry, sobriety, and orderly behaviour, I flatter myself, can hardly be disputed. Rewards for the apprehending and convicting offenders, must undoubtedly make their situation much more dan-

dangerous, and often be the means of bringing them to speedy punishment, and it is highly proper they should be continued; but the great and beneficent work of preventing those mischiefs and disorders from falling upon the public, and unhappy thoughtless men from being brought into such miserable and dangerous circumstances, is totally left undone.

That no neglect may happen in regard to a due examination being made into the conduct and state of the common people, every parish should be obliged to that duty half yearly at least; and in large and populous parishes, perhaps, quarterly, or oftner if found necessary, and to report to the justices at the quarter or petty sessions, or otherwise to any justice in the neighbourhood, who should be empowered to proceed against idleness, drunkenness, or any other disorderly behaviour. And that every parish, in case of neglect, should be subject to such penalty as to the legislature shall seem proper.

It is absolutely necessary that this duty should be well attended, to prevent its falling into a few or low hands, which would in a great measure defeat the influence and weight of their meeting together. If such Inhabitants as shall be appointed to this service, were subjected to a small penalty

nalty for non-attendance, to be divided among those that shall be present; or, perhaps, if some allowance was made by the parish for attending this very material duty, they might find their account in it.

At each of these meetings, whether half yearly, quarterly, or oftener, the names of all the common people, whether house-keepers or inmates, together with the names of all such persons who shall keep public-houses, or entertain poor lodgers, should be called over; at which times the parish-officers, together with the beadle, in such parishes where they employ one, should always be present, that they may be ready to give such information as may have come to their knowledge concerning the behaviour of any person whose name has been called over. And it should particularly be enjoined the beadle and other officers, to employ themselves diligently in getting the best insight they are able into the true state of the common people; and when any complaint is intended to be made either by the parish-officers or others, the persons against whom the complaint is designed, should have previous notice, and be obliged to attend, that they may be ready to hear and answer for themselves.

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Upon these occasions great discretion is necessary in those inhabitants who shall be appointed to this duty, among whom the minister of the parish ought always to be one. All kind of harshness and bitterness of reproof should by all means be avoided, even the most obstinate and refractory should be left without any just cause of complaint on that account; and whenever they oblige us to have recourse to the civil magistrate for further assistance to carry the laws into execution, it should appear to be done with the greatest reluctance and regret, in order that every one may see, and be convinced, that nothing but their own real happiness and truest interests, which are necessarily and unalterably connected with the public utility and safety, had any share in our proceedings; and, whenever it should appear that our kind and paternal admonitions were attended with a suitable influence upon their behaviour, it might be very proper if parishes were enabled to apply, out of the poors-rate, such small rewards as might encourage men to continue in well-doing, and also remain a reputable token of the public approbation.

And that an inquiry into the state and behaviour of the common people, may be made easier to the inhabitants, whoever has already, or shall at any time hereafter, lett a dwelling-house

to any person who has no other visible means of supporting himself and family except his frugality and labour, he should be obliged immediately to give in his name and employment, together with an account of what family he has, to the churchwarden or overseer of the poor ; and in like manner all persons who entertain inmates of the same rank, should be laid under the same obligation ; and notice likewise should always be given, whenever such inhabitants shall quit such houses or lodgings. And if any person whatever, who hires either a house or lodging, shall dare to do it under a false name, the penalty ought to be very severe ; by which means delinquents and suspected persons, and all others, must either expose themselves to the risk of such penalties, or make it much easier for the public to find them out, whenever they shall see occasion ; as their names and employment, together with an account of what family they have, must stand in the book of some parish or other. And, in order to induce all persons to be more cautious, and make due inquiry beforehand, it is highly reasonable that the owners of such houses, and all persons who shall let out poor lodgings, should be made, in some measure, accountable to the parish for the behaviour of such people as they shall think proper to introduce.

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And whenever it shall happen that an inhabitant of any parish shall be convicted of any breach of the law, and it shall appear to the magistrate before whom such offender shall be tried, that no regular inquiry had been made into the state and behaviour of the common people within six kalendar months, or otherwise, as directed by law; in all such cases, the parish which shall have neglected so necessary a duty, should always be obliged to pay a double penalty.

The largeness of any parish does not at all increase the difficulty of inquiring into the state and behaviour of the common people. Such parish may be divided into any number of districts that shall be thought necessary or convenient, only let the care of inspection fall to the share of the principal inhabitants which shall reside within each district.

And as all persons whatever, who have no visible means of supporting themselves and families except their labour, should be obliged to give a satisfactory account of that matter whenever they are called upon by proper authority; if due care was taken, even those large and populous out-parishes in London and Westminster, where the most loose, disorderly and abandoned persons take up their ordinary or casual residence, might soon
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be cleared, and put into good order, without the least difficulty; and those unfortunate people, to their own unspeakable happiness, as well as the public safety, be reduced to the necessity of supporting themselves by some honest labour.

Whatever penalties parishes shall incur by any inhabitants being convicted of burglary, felony, or any other breaches of the laws, such penalties should always be divided between the informer, prosecutor, and parish where the informer shall reside, although he should belong to the same parish with the offender, in such proportions as to the legislature shall seem proper: And whenever the parish where the offender resides, shall be the prosecutor, or the means of convicting such offender, such parish should always in that case be excused from any penalty whatever.

It may be proper to observe, in this place, that the case of soldiers in quarters, and of those in barracks and encampments, perhaps, cannot well be included in the foregoing plan, as it would be unreasonable that parishes should be answerable for offences which they do not seem to have had sufficient power to prevent: The officers of each regiment appear to be the principal persons whose immediate duty it is to watch over the behaviour of the common soldiers. They are armed

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already with sufficient authority, and may always be seconded by the power of the civil magistrate. And, as many disorders happen from that quarter, some further provision should be made for enforcing so necessary a reformation.

And as the disorderly and profane behaviour of the common soldiers, has undoubtedly a considerable share in corrupting the morals of the people in all places where they are quartered, some effectual care should be taken by their officers to prevent such disorders, both by their own examples, and by such punishments of the offenders as shall appear most likely to put a stop to offences of such dangerous tendency: And if the same care was taken on board all his majesty's ships, as well as others, it could not fail of having a very happy influence upon the public morals.

But, in order more effectually to prevent such irregularities and breaches of the laws as are hinted at above, as all the neighbouring parishes may be endangered, if any one parish shall not carry the laws into execution, by taking care that good order, sobriety, and industry be preserved among the common people; whenever it shall happen that any one or more of the inhabitants of any parish, who have no visible way of maintaining
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themselves and families except by their frugality and labour, shall be notoriously idle, intemperate, or disorderly ; or shall be generally looked upon from habitual idleness, extravagance, or any other suspicious circumstances, to be pilferers, hedge-breakers, poachers, or smugglers, or in any other way disturbers of the public peace ; if notice shall not be given in some reasonable time by the parish where they usually reside, to the proper magistrate, in order that they may be dealt with according to law ; any inhabitant of their own, or any neighbouring parish, should, in consequence of such neglect, be encouraged to give information ; and if it shall appear to the magistrate before whom it is laid, to be well founded, he shall be empowered to take such measures to restrain and punish the offenders, as the law shall direct ; and, at the same time, to lay such fine upon the parish where the offender resided, and which had neglected its duty, to the great offence and danger of the public, as to the legislature shall seem proper.

Some effectual care should be taken to suppress all houses, whether public or private, of low prostitution and debauchery, or that shall entertain disorderly and suspected persons, which have been too long suffered, to the utter ruin of many unhappy people both in their circumstances and

health. I would not be understood to insinuate, that houses for the reception of persons above the rank of the common people should be suffered, where those scenes of lewdness, disorder and riot, are carried on in the most open and indecent manner, to the great offence of all men who have any regard to public order and decorum : but the nature of my subject leads me to take particular notice of such things more especially as are immediately calculated to draw the common people into idleness, expence and ruin. Yet persons of better condition should remember they are answerable for all the consequences of that influence their example must naturally have over the minds and behaviour of the lower people. In all cases of this sort, if the parish where these houses are situated, shall not take care in due time to suppress them, encouragement should be given to any inhabitants of their own, or any neighbouring parishes, to give information to the proper magistrate, who, upon conviction, should be enabled to lay such fine upon the parish which shall have neglected its duty, as the law shall direct. And the parish, in those cases, should always have a remedy against the owner or occupier of the house. The same encouragement should be given to informations against common prostitutes which infest the streets, and the same remedy against the
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owner or occupier of the house wherever they shall happen to reside.

Provision should be made by law, not only that no licences should be granted without the resolution of a parish-meeting first had, as is proposed in the former part of this inquiry : but whenever it shall appear that a greater number of houses are already licenced than are necessary for the public convenience, of which every particular parish should always be supposed a competent judge, or that any one should suffer gaming, tipling, or any other disorderly behaviour, such house should be immediately suppressed by a resolution of a parish-meeting for that purpose : And whenever such disorderly house shall not be suppressed in due time, or immediately after notice given of such offence, but suffered to go on to the great inconvenience of the neighbouring parishes, such parish should be subjected to a penalty, upon information and conviction, as is proposed above in like cases.

And as nothing can have a more direct tendency to encourage idleness and disorder among the common people, and consequently increase the poor-rate, than unnecessary alehouses, it might perhaps be very proper, if all such inhabitants as shall hold under ten, twelve, or fifteen pounds a

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year in land; or eight, ten, or twelve pounds in houses, according to the value of house-rent in different parts of the country, and who, of course, must be very little interested in the expence of supporting the Poor, were disqualified from voting at all such parish-meetings as shall be held either for procuring licences for public-houses, or for the suppressing such as are already licensed.

And as there are many instances of private houses selling ale, beer, and other liquors without a licence, to the great detriment and corruption of the common people, and loss of the revenue; in all such cases, if information shall not be given in due time by the parish where the offence shall happen; the same encouragement should be given to any inhabitant of their own, or any neighbouring parish, as is proposed above; in all which cases, the parish should have some remedy against the owner or occupier of the house.

Perhaps if, in every hundred, or larger district, an officer was appointed, and paid out of the county-rate, whose particular duty it should be to take effectual care that this law be carried into strict and immediate execution in every parish within his district, it might be a very proper and useful regulation.

It does not appear to me, that any reasonable objection can be made against subjecting parishes to such penalties as they shall bring upon themselves by such shameful neglect of their duty, by which means they expose not only themselves, but the public likewise, to so great danger and terror. I am persuaded it is the only effectual remedy that can ever, in any tolerable degree, put some stop to so many dangerous and increasing evils. Nor is it to be apprehended that these penalties can ever fall very severely upon any parishes : it will always most probably be in their own power either totally to prevent them, or at least keep them within the most moderate bounds ; if they were less, they would not sufficiently excite their care and attention. But if, contrary to expectation, it should ever happen, from any extraordinary circumstances, that these penalties should, in any parishes, without any neglect on their side, exceed the bounds of reason and moderation ; in all such cases the judge before whom the offenders shall be tried, might be empowered to lighten the burthen, by obliging the neighbouring parishes, or the whole hundred, to bear their proportionable share ; though I flatter myself there can hardly any parish be so circumstanced, that will not, upon the whole, save much more in the lowering its poor-rate, than will be paid in fines.

The really industrious Poor hardly ever either want, or will accept any relief from the parish ; and whenever any occasion draws them from their usual labour, they are constantly observed to express their unwillingness and dissatisfaction : They quit it with full as much regret and uneasiness, as the idle and profligate are dragged to it. How greatly does it concern every parish to endeavour at increasing the first, and lessening the number of the last.

But after all that has been said, it is undoubtedly true, that nothing can add so great weight to all such laws, as shall be thought necessary to restrain and regulate the manners and practice of the common people, as a more general example of moral and religious behaviour among their superiors. Every friend to virtue and religion must rejoice, and conceive the most sanguine hopes from the illustrious pattern set by the Sovereign of every public and domestic excellence. Happy would it be for mankind, were it easy, even for a prince of such exalted and amiable accomplishments, clearly to discern the true characters and qualifications of men through the obscure medium usually shed around thrones, by the arts and colourings of ambition and interest ; and would our unhappy divisions and endless contentions allow him to follow the genuine suggestions of his royal mind, and
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leave him at full liberty to avail himself of his penetration and fortitude, in the pursuit of his own truest glory and happiness, as well as the public good, by inflexibly determining, that no titles, no connections, no knowledge, no splendor of parts, no abilities whatever, unadorned with real patriotism and intrinsic worth, should ever find countenance or admission to the royal favour, we might then, indeed, be allowed to flatter ourselves with the hopes that religion and public spirit might raise their drooping heads, and even become fashionable, and flourish in an air that has not usually been supposed the most favourable. Nor could such shining lights exhibited to public view from such advantageous eminences, fail to attract the attention, and engage the imitation of all orders and degrees of men.

These good purposes would also be greatly promoted, if more care was taken in general in the education of the sons of our nobility, and gentlemen of large fortune; for notwithstanding many of them, to their honour and praise, take all due care to have them furnished with every kind of knowledge and accomplishments that are necessary for those high and important stations, which it is probable they will one day fill; yet this is far from being always the case. It must be owned, for the credit of our great public schools,

schools, that so long as such young gentlemen are continued there, affairs go on generally perhaps as well as can be expected, under that universal remissness, and disregard of authority which at present prevail among all orders and degrees of men : little or no distinction is made between them and the sons of persons of inferior rank and fortune ; the business of the school must be done, and the discipline submitted to equally by all. But after they are once emancipated from thence, the real and true business of education is too often pretty well over. If they are sent to either of our own universities, their friends and the gentlemen to whose care the education of youth in those places is committed, seem to be sometimes too well agreed that such strict application, regularity of behaviour, and compliance with the statutes, as are expected to be submitted to, and thought absolutely necessary for young gentlemen of inferior rank and fortune, may in great measure be dispensed with ; and that a thorough knowledge and proficiency in human learning, the sciences, the history and laws, both ancient and modern, of their own and foreign countries, is necessary only for men of the learned professions. If they are sent abroad to any foreign university for two or three years, and after that to make the grand tour and see the world, without having previously laid in proper and sufficient stores for so long and dangerous an expedition, I

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am afraid the case is not much mended. It would sometimes, I apprehend, be more for their own as well as their country's credit, if they would be content to see the world in secret, without giving the world at the same time an opportunity of seeing them. This affair is become an immense and ruinous expence to the nation. The returns are too often made in refinements upon all the follies and vices of Europe, to be added to our own national stock. Perhaps I am grown an old-fashioned man; but be that as it may, I shall never prevail on myself to believe that more application, more learning, and more knowledge are necessary for a clergyman, who most probably may never want them for any other purposes except the instruction of a small country parish, and his own private amusement, than for gentlemen who, by and by, may sit in the great assembly of the nation; or for some perhaps who soon may find themselves in the arduous and important situation of being hereditary counsellors of their Sovereign, and of becoming at the same time both legislators and judges.

Our theatrical representations have for more than an age past, been a reproach upon the national taste; and have had undoubtedly no inconsiderable share in corrupting the morals of the people. What can a sensible foreigner think of us, when

when he shall see women of the first quality and fashion patiently sitting four hours together, and seemingly amused with representations where such ribaldry and licentiousness are introduced; with the strongest intimations of business to be done behind the scenes, as a woman of modesty, among the lowest and most uneducated of the vulgar, ought to blush to hear. By these means we see the stage, which might be usefully employed in the service of morality and decency, and in having a considerable share in forming a public taste becoming a brave virtuous and enlightened nation, prostituted to the infamous purposes of debasing and corrupting the minds of young persons of all degrees. It is high time to get rid of a vicious and unnatural practice introduced in the reign of an easy monarch, devoted to pleasure, and seconded by a licentious court; to pay so much respect to a polite, and perhaps as virtuous an audience as any in Europe, and to suppose more reasonable and acceptable methods might constantly be found for their amusement, than by the introduction of such scenes as are only fit for brothels. I have heard that the managers of our theatres, more particularly of one of them, have endeavoured to reform the stage, by introducing such representations as a sensible audience need not blush to attend. It is their duty to persevere, although they should not be able
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immediately to break through the public taste. Decency, propriety, and truth are natural to the human mind, and if pursued with constancy, and proper respect, will always at last prevail. And I may be allowed to be the more sanguine on this occasion, as native dignity, and unaffected modesty, by the unanimous consent of all the nations of Europe, are the characteristicks of the women of this country. And so difficult is it to efface, or even obscure, the durable impressions of a virtuous education, that if any person whatever, should dare in private conversation to introduce any kind of licentiousness of this sort, in the presence of far the greatest part perhaps of those very women who had submitted to the public taste upon the stage, without the least appearance of being offended, he might reasonably expect it would be the last time he would ever be admitted to that honour.

The greatest care should be taken that sobriety and good order be preserved in all jails, and places of confinement for labour and correction, and that the keepers of such places be men of sober, religious, and decent behaviour; and that sermons and prayers be had twice every Sunday, and prayers at least twice every week on the working days; and that some grave and devout clergyman be appointed for that service, and sufficiently

ficiently paid out of the county rate. And if the clergy of London and other cities and county towns, would take their turns in supplying this truly pious and useful duty, it would be greatly for their credit. There is too much reason to apprehend, that under the present general neglect, the idle and refractory, who are committed to these places of confinement for their correction and amendment; and such unhappy persons as stand charged with various crimes and misdemeanours, there to remain in safe custody, until the time of their trial shall come, when perhaps the greatest part of them shall be acquitted and discharged; from the examples they meet with there of every kind of immorality and profaneness, are generally turned out greater proficients, and more hardened in iniquity than they were before they went in. Nor are unhappy debtors I fear, to the reproach and scandal of this nation, in a much better situation. The reformation of these disorders should be made the duty of the gentlemen in the commission of the peace, at their general and quarter sessions in every county.

Such corporal punishments as are generally made use of in houses of correction, are by no means calculated to bring about any considerable reformation, more especially in young persons, where the disease is not become inveterate, and
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where there may be some possible hopes of amendment. In such there generally remains some sense of duty, and regard to character; when that is once irrecoverably lost, by their being brought to public shame, they soon afterwards become hardened and obstinate sinners, and consider a whipping bout as an easy and transient penalty, which they may happen to pay once or twice in their life-times, for the constant privilege of offending: and frequently when they get among their fellow sufferers, and companions in iniquity, are said to make it a matter of sport and merriment. Labour is their aversion, and the only punishment they dread. One, two, or three months of close confinement, short allowance and hard labour is no laughing matter; they would frequently, during that time, find themselves at full leisure to reflect coolly and soberly upon their errors; and I am much mistaken if two or three of these experiments, or perhaps sometimes less, would not generally bring the most obstinate and hardened among them to some sense of their duty; and to conclude, if this is to be the case, they might as well work for themselves at large, as for the public, with hard fare, and under close confinement.

With the greatest respect and deference to that honourable assembly, I beg leave to observe, that
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the inspection into the public manners should be the care of parliament; and that not casually as it may happen to be moved for by any public spirited member; a standing committee should be appointed for that great and important service; and might be called the committee for public morals; which committee should meet regularly once a week during every session, and have laid before them as exact an account as can be procured of the state and behaviour of the people in every county, city, and corporate town; which accounts should be sent up by the clerks of the peace, recorders or town clerks, or other proper officers; who might of course be supplied with them half-yearly, quarterly, or oftener, according as the legislature shall appoint these inquiries to be made in every particular parish; by which means the committee would see at one view the public state of morals over the whole kingdom, and thereby be always enabled to regulate and actuate the whole extensive plan: nor are these things in their own nature at all difficult; nothing is required but firmness and constancy. And if this great work should not be seriously and in earnest entered upon, and vigorously and effectually pursued, under the reign of so excellent a prince, all good men will mourn, and despair of ever seeing so happy a change. But, what gives no small encouragement to hope is, that this most important and truly

truly royal duty will be greatly facilitated, as his majesty will be thereby enabled to carry into the most extensive practice, the natural dispositions and longings of his benevolent and parental mind; and which will most certainly render his Majesty the truest blessing, and ornament of his people, and in the highest sense entitle him to that most venerable and amiable appellation, of being the father of his country; and transmit his name with more durable honour, and more endear his memory to all future ages, than if all the military glories of all the heroes of the present, and past times, were to be united and center in his Majesty alone: Nor could the happy effects which must necessarily follow from such regulations, fail to excite an emulation among all civilized nations; and so his Majesty in time most probably become, by his example, the happy instrument, under providence, of destroying the dominion of vice and licentiousness, and of establishing in it's room the kingdom of more general order and righteousness over the whole world.

If the scandalous practice of common begging should once be effectually discouraged; it is absolutely necessary that employment should be found for persons of every age that are able and willing to work; and the idle and refractory should be sent to the house of correction, there to

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be detained, and constantly kept to hard labour, until they shall be brought to a due sense of their errors. If materials were provided by parishes for the spinning of linnen and woollen thread and yarn, for the making cloth of an inferior sort for the use of the common people, and also for knitting of stockings, and for spinning of coarse yarn for the making of mops, coverlets for beds, ordinary blankets, and such other fabrics ; or for spinning coarse thread or twine for sacks and other goods of that sort, which are generally wanted ; and if they were afterwards employed in making them up into proper sizes for the use of farmers and others, and also in the dressing of flax and hemp, and in places near sea-port towns, in picking of oakum ; some suitable occupation might always be found for persons of every age. Those that are able and in health to be allowed in proportion to what they shall earn, always subjected to such penalties as the legislature shall think proper, for wasting or embezzling the materials, or for damaging or spoiling their work. Even the aged and infirm might generally be kept either wholly, or in great measure, from falling upon the parish, by allowing such of them as are most impaired by age or infirmity, but still capable of doing something towards their own support, a little more than they earn, in order to encourage and promote industry as much and as far as possible ;

sible ; and indeed it is an act of the greatest kindness to the last mentioned persons, to provide for them some employment suitable to their strength and age, by which means they may be enabled in great measure to procure for themselves a comfortable subsistence, which is a situation infinitely preferable to any support whatever, that is altogether precarious. Nor are there many infirm persons, except such as labour under the pressure of some severe and violent disorder ; nor many persons so utterly disabled by age, that might not be accommodated with some employment or other, suited to their weakness and infirmities ; than which nothing would contribute more to their cheerfulness and health, and to the removing that languor of the mind, and that insupportable tiresomeness and disgust which constantly and necessarily accompany absolute idleness in persons of every condition. It might also be very proper, and would have a natural tendency to encourage and promote industry, if some small gratifications were allowed, especially to young persons, wherever any extraordinary care and diligence should appear : and all this might be done with infinitely more suitability and propriety, and I am thoroughly persuaded with very great savings to the nation, by suffering them to continue in their own dwellings, than by any public institutions whatever : such materials as are necessary for their employment

might always be delivered to them by the churchwarden or overseer, or by a committee of the principal inhabitants, or whom they should appoint, and which person so appointed might be able to take upon him the care of many neighbouring parishes at the same time, in like manner as by all other manufacturers; taking an account of the weight out and in, and at the same time making a proper allowance for waste: here they would each of them always remain along with their own families, and live in their accustomed method, both in respect of diet and lodging. Here would be wanted no new expensive buildings, no expensive management; there will be room left for no scandalous jobs among bricklayers, carpenters, brewers, bakers, butchers, and various other tradesmen. The only things necessary here will be a sufficient provision of materials and implements. The persons employed by the parish will be upon the same footing as spinners, weavers, and other artificers, employed by any other masters, and by persons equally interested to take care that they execute their work with diligence, carefulness, and honesty; and who will have the same remedy in every case of breach of duty. And the people thus employed, as they will be always paid, at least in proportion to what they shall earn, and the aged and infirm generally something more for their encouragement, will
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evidently upon the whole, have as great, if not greater motives to diligence, care, and fidelity, than workmen in general employed by any other persons whatever. And by the introduction of such coarse fabrics as are mentioned above, especially of linnens, the nation as well as private persons would be greatly benefited; as the importation of foreign goods of that sort, which at present is very considerable, might be rendered in great measure unnecessary.

The inhabitants of such parishes as are situated within any moderate distance of manufacturing towns, which are greatly increased, and have spread themselves almost over the whole country, can seldom want employment. And in great manufacturing towns whenever trade happens to be dull, and many artificers consequently turned off; if the masters, until such time as business shall revive, would provide a surplus stock of such goods as they know will be wanted in half a year, or a year's time, this inconvenience might perhaps in some measure be remedied; more especially if the journeymen would submit to a small diminution of wages, in order to enable the master workman to keep such dead stock upon his hands so considerable a time without being too great a loser; and every industrious person would certainly judge this preferable to the being destitute of all employ-

ment, whereby both himself and his family must be exposed to the greatest distress, or become a dead weight upon the public.

If some sort of employment was once provided for all persons that were able, in any degree, to work ; and if the idle and refractory were always sure to meet with such punishment as they most certainly deserve, that troublesome and expensive business of settlements, would probably soon become an affair of no very great consequence ; as few poor families, if proper care was taken, would ever in all likelihood become very chargeable to the parish. But if it should seem expedient to continue the present laws in general regarding settlements ; this alteration at least, I apprehend, ought to be made, that whenever any parishes have a mind to send any person to the place of their legal settlement, such removal should always be at the sole expence of such parish, although it should be at ever so great a distance.

If farmers in general, who are out of the reach of manufacturing towns, would make a reserve of such things as may be postponed for a year or two without any great inconvenience, such as laying of quickset hedges, scouring of ditches, and the like, labouring men would seldom want employment in the winter, from the shortness of
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crops, and the threshing being consequently sooner over upon that account ; in the summer, more especially in the times of hay and corn harvest, they have generally sufficient employment for all such as are willing to work ; and indeed are often at a loss to know where to get hands. The high roads since the general introduction of turnpikes, and other occasional public and private works, employ great numbers. And indeed when parishes shall find themselves not only obliged to maintain their poor, whenever they are out of employment, but also subjected to a penalty for suffering them to remain in that situation ; it becomes in a great measure unnecessary to endeavour to show them by what method they may best remove that inconvenience ; their own interest, and the particular situation and circumstances of parishes will better inform them, than any general instructions whatever ; use and experience will certainly point out various methods unthought of at present. Besides, industry in one man of course begets and supports industry in others. The labour of a very small proportion of hands is employed in the clothing and feeding a million of wretches who are almost naked and starved ; where the rags of the dead are worn over again by the living ; and where the stale unwholesome refuse of fish-stalls and shambles is their highest luxury.

It is absolutely necessary that the price of labour should be kept within the most moderate bounds in every country which carries on any considerable commerce in it's manufactures with foreign nations. Whenever therefore the necessities of government oblige the parliament to raise money, and lay taxes for our defence and support ; the utmost care should be taken that all such things as the common people want for their daily sustenance, be as much as possible exempt from such additional burthens, as they must of course in time prove fatal to every country, whose riches, power, and strength, depend on it's foreign trade ; as it must enable all rival nations, wherever the expence of living, and consequently the price of labour is cheaper, to undersell them at foreign markets. The additional duty upon malt greatly affects the common people ; and the severity of it falls principally upon the most industrious and deserving ; who seldom or never frequent ale-houses, and to whom consequently the price of all liquors, either brewed or distilled from malt, and sold at those places, is altogether immaterial ; as indeed whatever small beer, or little ale they stand in need of, either for their common use, or occasional refreshment, is in general brewed at their own homes ; except by those who happen to reside in cities, or great towns, where they may, if they think fit, supply themselves from the com-

mon brewer. Nor indeed is the advanced price of ale and strong beer at public-houses of that consequence to the common people in general as some men seem to imagine. They are undoubtedly led into the principal part of their expences, at these houses, through idleness, intemperance, and vicious habits, and seldom through any real necessity ; in which cases the advanced price is so far from being any real inconvenience, or evil to them, that, on the contrary, their health and well-being, together with the happiness both of themselves and their distressed families, are thereby more likely to be promoted, than if, by the cheapness of those liquors, the means of proceeding to excess, and of abusing themselves, was left more within their power and circumstances. Nor do I apprehend, that in the long catalogue of taxes that affect the necessaries of life, any one can be pitched upon which the sober, industrious and really valuable part of the common people have less reason to complain of, than the duty upon ale and strong beer ; nor does the complaint, I am well assured, come from that quarter. And as the present situation of our affairs is such that we cannot afford to part with both duties, they had certainly much better remain as they are, than that the beer should be discharged, and the malt remain burthened. And indeed the duty upon ale and strong beer, instead of being the first

first of all those taxes which seem in any degree to affect the Poor, ought in all reason to be the very last that shall be taken off, as it is undoubtedly a tax upon the most dangerous and pernicious luxury, the luxury of the common people.

There are in the metropolis, and in many other parts of the kingdom, societies or clubs of young labouring men, who appropriate a trifling part of their weekly earnings towards raising a fund for the support of their members under any infirmities or disabilities arising from sickness, accidents, or age; which, if properly regulated, are excellent and useful institutions, and undoubtedly prevent many poor families from becoming chargeable to the parish; many of them having very laudable rules and orders for their government and behaviour. And, as it is always the interest of every single person to discountenance idleness and extravagance as much as possible, and to encourage and promote industry, sobriety and frugality in every member of the society, it might be very proper if all reasonable encouragement was given to make them more general; and it would certainly contribute greatly to that end, if gentlemen, and persons in circumstances who live in the neighbourhood, would sometimes countenance them by becoming honorary members.

As to the most proper method of relieving such necessitous persons as must at all times want our assistance, notwithstanding we do every thing in our power to prevent it, I am persuaded it will be, upon the whole, both less expensive to the public, and more suitable to the circumstances of the Poor themselves, if they are suffered to remain in their own dwellings, and there relieved or supported according to their several necessities, than if either single parishes should collect them into work-houses so called, or a considerable number be joined together for that purpose. A few instances, perhaps, might be produced where this collective method may have been attended with success, from the accidental care and experience of the persons who have had the care and management, or from some other circumstances peculiar to the place where the experiment has been made. But, if I am not much mistaken, should we form our judgment from the whole, we shall find that these establishments have been so far from answering the expectations of the public, that, in general, the evil has been rather increased than diminished, both in respect of the numbers of necessitous objects which have presented themselves, and also the proportionable expence of maintaining them.

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When a workhouse is first established in any parish, the inhabitants always promise themselves great savings and reformation; materials are immediately purchased for the employment of all the Poor that are able to work, and every thing puts on the face of business; but, by degrees, the public care and attention slacken; mens private affairs and engagements appear to them sufficient excuses; the house is filled and nothing done; the inhabitants, when they find the taxes increase, wonder and complain; determine that strict inquiry shall be made; resolve their affairs shall be better managed for the future; then try again with the same success as before.

If we find, by the experience of many years, that these houses are seldom properly managed in single parishes, where the attendance is, as it were, at the next door; what is to be expected when many parishes shall be formed into one large district, and the greatest part of the persons under whose care and management the Poor are intended to fall, must necessarily live at the distance of many miles? It requires no great penetration to foretel what the consequence must be. The error lies in expecting from man, what men in general have never done, and therefore it is most reasonable to presume they never will.

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If the legislature should at any time resume the consideration of this affair, I beg leave to observe, it would greatly assist them in forming a true judgment, if the state of all the work-houses in England should be ordered to be laid before them, with an account of the number of years each of them has been established; also how many persons have been annually admitted into each, with an account of the weekly expence of maintenance, the clear yearly profits arising from labour, the number of infants that have been received, with an exact account of what proportion hath died, together with the state of the poor-rate some considerable number of years before and after each establishment.

From the time the poor are admitted, and have changed their own coarse and slender diet for the comparative luxury of these houses, the whole expence of their maintenance is thrown upon the parish; and their entertainment there is generally such, that I apprehend the greatest part of the poor, especially the idle and improvident, which I am afraid sometimes make a considerable majority, are so well satisfied with their situation, which is usually much better than they can ever probably procure for themselves, that they are ready to find any pretext for continuing there as long as they possibly can; not only to the great
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and unnecessary oppression of the industrious inhabitants ; but at the same time also the public are deprived of an infinite number of hands that might be usefully employed in agriculture, arts and manufactures.

I would by no means be understood to insinuate that all proper care should not be taken of the poor, whenever they are not in a capacity of providing for themselves : it is the highest degree of public cruelty and ingratitude, to suffer men who have spent their youth and strength in labour and usefulness, to languish under the want of the common necessities and conveniencies of life, when age or infirmities have rendered them incapable of supporting themselves : but nevertheless, I think it is worthy the public attention, whether the making a more comfortable retreat for the idle, improvident, and undeserving, than the most sober, frugal, and industrious can generally expect to provide for themselves, does not naturally tend to weaken the motives to private care, and of course tempt the common people to shift the burthen from themselves upon the public. Too much regard and tenderness can hardly be shown to the deserving and laborious poor ; but surely when they come to be put upon an established support, some kind of distinction should be made,

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notwithstanding this rule can never take place in sudden and pressing emergencies.

There seem to me to be only two instances in which these public receptacles for the poor have so much as the appearance of utility ; I mean in the case of deserted children, and ancient persons who are utterly past their labour, and who have no relations that are able and whose duty it is to take care of them, and afford them some assistance. As to ancient persons, there seems to be some degree of cruelty in tearing them not only from their friends and acquaintance, but generally from the place of their birth and residence for the whole perhaps, or usually the greatest part of their past lives ; to which all men have particular attachments, and quit with regret and reluctance, and obliging them to mix with a set of people they know not, and to whom they are utterly unknown ; which generally must be the case in the plan of dividing the whole country into large districts. As for deserted children, or the children of such poor as are not able to support them, the many instances we find of almost incredible numbers that have been suffered to perish for want of proper care under the management of work-houses, is become a national barbarity and reproach, that well deserves the attention of the legislature. In both the above-mentioned cases,

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provision might always undoubtedly be made in some poor honest family, in a far more suitable, and proper manner, and at much less expence to the public ; and might at the same time also be of considerable advantage to such poor persons as should think proper to receive them, and often be the means of keeping them from becoming chargeable to the parish.

I apprehend in all other instances, where the poor can possibly want the public assistance, every circumstance both of convenience to themselves, and saving to the public, the case of lunatics only excepted, pleads in the strongest manner for continuing them in their own dwellings ; there they will always remain, under every circumstance of infirmity arising from sickness or age, under the eye and care of their dearest friends and nearest relations ; as these mutual intercourses of duty must generally lie between husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children, who will be always bound by every tie of duty, interest, and natural affection, to minister to their wants, alleviate their sufferings, and hasten their recovery : how little of this tenderness prevails in work-houses, the event in general I fear too plainly shews ; nor indeed can better things be reasonably expected, when we consider into what hands the care of the infirm and helpless of every age

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in public work-houses generally falls ; whoever among the women-poor appear to be best able are generally pitched upon, I apprehend, for that service ; a service imposed upon them perhaps against their inclination, and without much hopes of reward : how it has accordingly been executed, I remember not many years ago appeared before an august assembly, who had ordered an enquiry to be made, if I do not mistake, in some of the large parishes in Westminster, into the care and fate of such infants as had been under the management of these houses within a limited time ; and found, to the astonishment of all present, that not above one or two in forty or fifty, if my memory does not fail me, had escaped out of those merciless hands.

I am persuaded when the expence of providing convenient houses with their furniture, for the reception of the poor, as was intended by the late bill, together with all the various expences of management, is added to the charge of maintenance, it will be found they might have been relieved, or supported at their own homes, in a manner much more proper, and suitable to their usual way of living, with very great savings to the public. If we should estimate the expence of every six persons in these houses, at twenty four

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shillings a week, I believe no one conversant in these affairs will think the calculation much too high, when every thing is taken into the account, as many of them must be clothed as well as fed. If we take the families, upon an average of the whole labouring people of England, consisting of the same number of persons, I believe we shall find they make less, perhaps, than a third part of that money do the business without complaining; and as I apprehend, that bread, and butchers meat, make the principal part of their sustenance, in those houses, in all parts of the kingdom, the difference of expence can seldom be very considerable.

There seems to me to have been this manifest error and inconsistency, in the bill of the session before last, that the author seems to flatter himself, from the great utility of his scheme, that industry will be promoted, the number of necessitous objects greatly reduced, and consequently the public eased of great part of the expence in a few years; and at the same time the whole nation is put to immense charges, in providing, and furnishing large and expensive buildings, undoubtedly without any certainty, I believe without much probability of success; and which upon his own plan, if it should succeed, must shortly become in great measure empty and useless: besides, it is putting the poor upon such a peculiar,

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permanent, and almost unalterable establishment, notwithstanding any inconveniencies or defects which might afterwards appear, as can hardly ever be justified. The methods and regulations proposed in this treatise, have certainly this advantage over most other schemes which have been laid before the public, that the attempt will not be attended with much expence; so that whatever the success may be, the risk cannot be great.

If in some large and populous parishes in the out-parts of London and Westminster, or in other great towns, any difficulties may possibly arise in respect of taking care of the poor in their own dwellings, either in regard of supporting them under their necessities and infirmities, or the employment of such as are able to work; as in such parishes in general, especially in London and Westminster, work-houses are already established; such houses, wherever the parishioners shall think proper, might be continued. And they may at the same time have an opportunity of trying what may be done by the other method, and of forming some judgment from their own observation and experience, which way industry is most likely to be promoted, the real necessitous poor most properly relieved, and the public expence lessened.

Besides, there is one circumstance very disagreeable in our present method of proceeding, and which can hardly be inculcated too often; that notwithstanding the public are so severely oppressed with this heavy burthen, and which indeed in many places is become almost insupportable, and which without some effectual alteration must necessarily go on increasing; yet the wants and distresses of the poor are by no means lessened on that account; on the contrary they always have, and ever must at least keep pace with, if not out-run, the public provision made for their relief, be it ever so large and extensive; which indeed, whenever it exceeds its true bounds and proportion, or is improperly applied, is not only thrown away and wasted to no purpose, but has the most hurtful and dangerous influence upon the minds and practice of the common people, by taking off their only proper reliance upon their own frugality and industry, and by that means tempting and encouraging them to idleness and extravagance, with all their pernicious consequences; and afterwards, as is most natural, to a dependence on the public for assistance, or support.

Whoever has been at the trouble of attending our public hospitals for some years past, cannot but observe that the number of distressed objects,

which every week present themselves, and are rejected for want of room, is by no means lessened, notwithstanding the great increase of places for their reception and relief; a little more than forty years ago, I apprehend, there were only two public hospitals, and one house for lunatics, within the bills of mortality; since that time they are so immensely increased, that it is no easy matter to reckon them up; we meet with them in every quarter of the town; some of which perhaps were originally set on foot, and contributions solicited, from mean and interested views of particulars; but all of them undoubtedly carried into execution, and supported always by the well-meant zeal of charitable and benevolent persons; and whom I would by no means be understood to make answerable for that hurtful influence they did not foresee such foundations must necessarily have upon the minds and behaviour of the common people, whenever they are carried to too great an excess. As to the additional provision for lunatics, it is worthy the benevolence and humanity of the nation; nor can it be carried too far, so long as there shall remain one single object unprovided for.

There is something very peculiar in the public provision made for these unhappy people, which is, that it's good influence and usefulness might

be made to extend not only to people in low condition, who may happen to have this disorder fall upon any near relation; but even persons also in middling, and even easy circumstances, might receive the greatest advantages.

Whenever any one, whose income may happen to be from forty or fifty, to two, or even three hundred pounds a year, shall have this most dreadful of all calamities visit any one of his family, whom he is obliged to take care of; no man can well be a proper judge of the melancholy situation, without first having had experience of it himself, or being witness to the calamity and terror it occasions to others. If the unhappy object is taken care of at home, the attendance and expence, even in that case, must be very considerable; and what is still worse, the danger and distress present themselves continually before our eyes: if the inconvenience is removed to a distance, and provision made in any reputable house appropriated for the reception of such unfortunate people, the charges run so high, that if they continue long, they become absolutely ruinous and insupportable; with the common people in low circumstances the case is widely different, as the care and expence fall wholly upon the parish.

I am persuaded if a plan was rightly formed, and a number of gentlemen of character and public spirit would give encouragement to it, and undertake the care and management, an easy remedy might be provided against this calamity, which falls with such peculiar aggravation upon persons who happen to be in such a situation in the world, that they are not able to support the great expence attending private care, nor can with propriety accept of any charitable provision. To this end I would beg leave to propose that persons should be admitted, and provided with suitable apartments, attendance, physic, and all other necessaries at the different pensions following, *viz*, fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, ten, or perhaps rather fifteen pounds a year; which ever of the two last should appear sufficient, might be the sum settled for parish lunatics in general; and also so many more persons might be taken in gratis, as the savings from the pensions and private donations would support. By these means people in middling, and even easy circumstances, might place these unhappy objects under safe and reputable care and management, with suitable accommodations, in proportion to the different pensions, for less perhaps than one third of the expence that must accrue in private houses of credit; and at the same time provision made for greatly increasing the number of those they shall

think proper to admit gratis. If the gentlemen of St. Luke's hospital should approve of this hint, form it into a regular plan, and endeavour to carry it into execution, they would deserve greatly of the public; nor could it fail of success in such respectable hands.

If a more general spirit of orderly and virtuous behaviour could once be introduced; it is highly probable the number of these unhappy objects, which have been observed greatly to increase of late years, might be proportionably lessened. It cannot be doubted but that the consciousness of a life spent in dissipation, profligacy, and all kinds of criminal excesses, whenever such unhappy persons shall find themselves under the necessity, and some time or other they certainly must, of taking a full view of, and dwelling upon, the long and black account, may so disarrange or oppress the reasoning powers, that the mind can have no refuge but in the dreadful alternative of madness or suicide.

I flatter myself by this time it sufficiently appears that the measures hitherto generally taken, both by the public and by private persons, to supply and redress the wants and sufferings of the common people, to lessen the public expence, and introduce a more general spirit of industry, sobriety,

briety, and order, have by no means produced those good effects for which they were so charitably and piously intended; but on the contrary, that they always have and ever must encourage and promote the very evils they were designed to prevent.

But as the best laws are apt to be neglected, unless care is taken, from time to time, to preserve them in mens minds; if the legislature should approve of the methods and regulations recommended in this Inquiry, and enact them into a law, I apprehend provision should be made that all parishes be obliged to furnish themselves with such law, or an abstract of such parts of it as regard their behaviour, and take care that it be publickly read at a parish meeting, at least twice in every year; the most proper times for which, I apprehend, would be those days that shall be appointed for enquiring into the state and behaviour of the common people previous to their entering upon that business.

Thus have I ventured to lay my thoughts before the public, upon a subject of the greatest importance that can ever come under their consideration; and shall most readily leave the whole with them to dispose of in such manner as they shall think proper. It is a subject in which all mankind

kind are equally interested ; whoever therefore shall not fall in with my sentiments, it can hardly be supposed to arise from any other motives except their not admitting the force of my arguments. And notwithstanding I judged it a respect due to the public, not to trouble them with my thoughts upon this interesting subject, until they had undergone a long, severe, and careful examination ; and although I am thoroughly persuaded it is the only plan upon the whole, that can ever put any considerable stop to the progress of those various inconveniencies and evils which we have so long to our great misfortune laboured under ; and that, as it is, it would fully answer whatever I have allowed myself to expect from it ; yet am I by no means either so sanguine, or so vain, as to imagine many things may not have escaped me, which, upon trial, may appear necessary to carry into full execution the great purposes I have aimed at. Whoever, therefore, shall point out any errors or defects in this enquiry, I shall be so far from considering him in the light of an adversary, that on the contrary, I shall look upon him as a most valuable ally, engaged along with me in the same pursuit. If mankind are made better and happier, it is of little consequence from what hand the service comes.

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All reasonable men, I am well assured, will agree with me in this, that whoever shall rescue the common people of this nation from their present unhappy condition of idleness, extravagance, and vice, into which such numbers of thoughtless men have been unhappily betrayed, by any methods, consistent with that spirit of freedom observable in all our laws, which, to the glory of this happy nation, hold the liberty of the lowest subject in the same estimation with the highest, to habits of honest labour, sobriety and frugality, is their best and truest friend. The condition of the industrious, sober and virtuous labourer, if we make a true estimation of things, perhaps ought rather to excite our envy than pity. Health and peace of mind, the choicest blessings reserved by providence for mankind, are to be looked for in his humble cottage. His cares seldom exceed the limits of the day; the industry, frugality, and virtue of the parents being all the fortune his children will stand in need of. He sits down to his homely frugal meal with cheerfulness and appetite, the natural reward of virtuous labour, in vain sought after by pamper'd luxury in the most exquisite delicacies. His time, that insupportable burthen to the idle and voluptuous, never hangs heavy upon his hands; the love and practice of labour becoming at once his support and best enjoyment. The

night finds him prepared for sweet and uninterrupted repose. Religion teaches him to be thankful and content.

On the other hand the idle and improvident Poor, although they should not proceed to criminal breaches of the law, are in a situation sufficiently wretched, as they must generally be in want, not only of the comforts and conveniencies, but sometimes also of the very necessaries of life : but the greatest excess of misery that human nature can be capable of, is when unhappy, thoughtless men endeavour to remove or forget for a short season those evils that oppress them, by intemperance and criminal practices ; of which any one may be easily convinced, if he can bear to take a view of their wretched condition in any of the great out-parishes of London and Westminster, where in every lane and alley he may meet with whole families crowded into one miserable room, perishing in the midst of hunger and nakedness, of filth, vermin, and diseases. Their disorders and outrages men see and detest, and are ever ready to punish ; their sufferings are concealed from the publick observation. The means of relief are generally criminal and dangerous ; and such are their unhappy connections, that to retreat or go on are often equally hazardous. Add to all this, that every pain and every distress

distress they feel are embittered with the consciousness of their having brought the whole upon themselves by their own inexcusable folly and perverseness. But what above all aggravates their unhappy condition is, that under all this variety of wretchedness, so long as they continue in their vicious practices, they are utterly cut off from all hopes of the favour and protection of Almighty God both now and hereafter, that sovereign cordial of affliction to virtuous men.

The rich and powerful of this world, when they have not sufficient continence and fortitude to withstand the temptations which solicit them on every side, but forget the hand that raised them, and most unreasonably and ungratefully pervert those blessings and advantages designed by providence to be employed in the protection of the weak and innocent, and in the promoting the general prosperity and safety of all around them, as well as their own good fame and happiness, into the means and instruments of tyranny and oppression, of gratifying, without restraint, every unreasonable and vicious inclination, and of bringing upon themselves every kind of dishonour and wretchedness, from which dangers the honest labourer, by the lowness of his situation, finds himself happily sheltered : their impaired health, their ruined fame, their harassed and dis-

gusted

gusted sensations and appetites, and the reproaches of their own minds, convince them when it is too late, that they have altogether mistaken the road to true pleasure ; and by the miserable straits to which we see them reduced to get rid of their time and reflection, they become melancholy, but instructive examples to mankind of the insufficiency of riches and power ; and how far the possessors of them may fall short of the virtuous labourer in true happiness.

I am persuaded, if the methods and regulations recommended in the foregoing pages shall be carried into execution with any tolerable degree of care and attention, the happy effects will soon be sensibly felt among all degrees of men : industry, sobriety, and frugality will be promoted, and all kinds of intemperance and disorder, with every degree of violence upon the property and persons of the people, will be more effectually restrained, than by the most severe punishments. The smuggler, whose illegal proceedings are always notoriously known in the place of his usual residence, will find no protection or retreat ; and that infamous practice, so detrimental and discouraging to the fair trader, will receive a more fatal wound, than if our coasts were surrounded and watched by a thousand armed cutters, and the whole army employed upon that service alone ; to
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the great advancement of the revenue and national credit, at a time when every saving is of the utmost consequence. The game also, if that shall be thought worthy to be considered as an object of publick care, will be more effectually preserved, than by all the rigorous prosecutions of the association. The poacher will be in the same situation with the smuggler; he will be able to find no place of retreat; every parish, for its own safety, will be obliged to deliver him up into the hands of justice.

In every possible circumstance, wherein the behaviour of the common people can be considered, both their own well-being and happiness, together with the publick convenience and safety, will be so mixt and interwoven in the very body and constitution of the laws, that they can hardly fail of having their due influence and effect, both upon the minds and practice of the whole nation.

If the foregoing observations shall appear to have their foundation in reason and truth, and suited to the nature and circumstances of mankind, I do not doubt but they will meet with due regard from those gentlemen, whose station puts it in their power, and whose duty it is to
provide

provide equally for the good order, safety, and happiness of the whole people.

But more especially I beg permission, with all duty and respect, to lay the case of the Poor, distressed, and inconsiderate part of his people at the feet of that most excellent and amiable Prince, who rules over these nations, whose royal and parental virtues are the brightest ornaments of his crown, and whose illustrious example must add efficacy and dignity to every law that is calculated to promote the reformation and happiness of mankind.

F I N I S.

